CHALLENGE

THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

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MAY DAY 2023

YOU NEED COMMUNISM!

Here in Colombia the new government of Gustavo Petro has managed to curb the militancy of the workers, who are waiting for the campaign promises that will never be fulfilled. Our class must not fall for the illusions of change and postpone our revolutionary communist fight in favor of parliamentary and electoral illusions.

Meanwhile, the movement behind former president Alvaro Uribe has not resigned itself to losing its power. It tries to channel the phony promises of the new government and the discontent over the measures that affect the workers into backing their faction. They make statements appealing to easing the cost of living, health and education. They even call for mobilization against the new government.

Some from the former Uribe government even speak of coup intentions and audios have been published that would support these rumors. Although they currently do not have the strength to prepare a coup attempt, with their rhetoric of hate and war they are gaining the support of warmongering soldiers. They are also training their drug-trafficking gangs and even pay vulnerable migrant workers to carry out violent provocations during their rallies and

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Progressive Labor Party marched on May Day here in the city of Cambridge, where Sayed Faisal, a young Bangladeshi man was murdered by the police on January 4th. Sayed was having a mental illness episode, and his neighbor called the cops for help. Instead of helping, they shot him five times in the chest. Then, distorting the facts, the Cambridge PD claimed he was a threat to the community because he was carrying a knife, even though it was clear he was using the knife to harm himself. Furthermore, the city has put the killer cop on paid administrative leave and is refusing to release his name. That, plus the exceedingly long criminal investigation, stinks of a cover-up. This is yet another lethal example of how trigger-happy cops handle workers or students with mental health issues. The cops shoot first, blame the victim, and receive all the protection from the city government; meanwhile another member of the working class is murdered, and his family and community are traumatized.

We assembled at a nearby plaza, where college students and workers warmly received our militant speeches, flyers and CHALLENGEs. Some folks joined us as we marched,

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JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL FIGHT FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

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OUR FIGHT

✰Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

✰The dictatorship of the working class — communism—can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

✰Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

✰While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

✰Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

✰Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

✰Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women— sexism—and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

✰Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

✰Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

✰Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

CONTACT US

Email: desafio.challenge@gmail.com
Mail: Box 808 GPO, Brooklyn, NY 11202
Internet: Online: www.plp.org
Twitter: @PLPchallenge
Facebook: @Challenge Desafio
Instagram: @ PLPchallenge

@PLPCHALLENGE

WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

CHALLENGE is for the working class, produced by the working class. The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.
While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

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Editorial

Biden's ICE = gestapo Workers have no Borders!

While the Joe Biden administration has ended the use of Title 42, a public health law that was perverted to stop migrants from claiming asylum in the U.S., the criminal abuse of immigrant workers at the border with Mexico continues unabated. Liberal racist Biden is following in the lethal footsteps of open racist Donald Trump and deporter-in-chief Barack Obama. The crisis of capitalism that displaces workers from their homes is only getting worse. Whoever gets elected as the next capitalist stooge in the White House won't change that hard reality. Only communism—a new society run by and for the working class—can end this mass misery.

Breaking his campaign promise to create a humane border, liar Biden has instead accelerated deportations by adding a transit ban. His new policy requires proof that a migrant has tried and failed to get asylum from a country they passed through en route to the U.S.—in most cases Mexico, where the bosses refuse to provide safe conditions or a reasonable path to legal residency. Any migrants breaking this bogus rule can be deported summarily and blocked from reentering the U.S. for five years. These workers are forced into lives of utter instability and daily degradation, all for the 'crime' of trying to survive. The recent death of an 8 year old Honduran migrant girl, seeking ayslum on the Texas border after being denied medical assistance is just one of the many racist horrors committed by the liberal fascists on a daily basis (NBCnews.com, 5/19)

The cages Obama built are still full of migrant workers and families, with more than four thousand people a day booked into immigration detention centers (Washington Post, 5/19). Undocumented workers are sorted for immediate deportation or bused to inhumane conditions in mass shelters. They sleep on police station floors with no beds in Chicago, or in "respite centers" without showers in New York (Chicago Sun Times, 5/1). Terrorizing migrants coerces them to take jobs with low wages and to accept potential pathways to citizenship that enforce loyalty to the bosses, often by joining their military.

As the bosses' profit system crumbles all around us, the international working class continues to bear the brunt of its failure. The migrant crisis is part of a broader crisis of global capitalism. Sharpening inter-imperialist rivalry and the war in Ukraine have made the situation even more desperate for the working class.

We, the communists of the Progressive Labor Party, affirm that workers have no borders. We must fight back against racism, nationalism, and the bosses' brutal attacks against migrant workers. In unity with the international working class, we are building an international communist movement that will smash the bosses' borders with communist revolution.

Workers uprooted by capitalism

Immigrant workers have been uprooted by the misery generated by capitalism–by unemployment and hunger, by criminal gangs in league with the bosses, by the violence perpetuated by this ruthless system. In countries like Guatemala, El Salvador, Venezuela, and Honduras, workers have long been struggling under extreme poverty. Over the last three years, with jobs lost to the COVID pandemic and living standards eroded by inflation, conditions have gone from bad to horrific.

The working class in the U.S. has not been spared. In New York City, the world's greatest center of wealth, half the population lacks adequate income to meet basic needs (Citizens Committee for Children of New York).

To divert workers from the reality of the disaster of the profit system, the bosses are criminalizing poverty and displacement. Their targets are the homeless or those forced to make a dangerous trek across thousands of miles to find work. These are the people that capitalism deems most expendable. The racist rulers have sent the message, and the most racist elements of the working class are following their lead. Jordan Neely was murdered on a New York subway for demanding food. To protect the real estate developers' profit margins, people without homes are refused shelter in liberal-run cities where hundreds of thousands of apartments sit empty (City Limits, 11/17/22). In fact, there are 28 vacant homes for every homeless person in the U.S. (United Way, 3/28).

Bosses' economy depends on undocumented labor

Capitalists ignore borders every day. They freely span the globe to fight their wars and to exploit workers and raw materials. They use borders to restrict or expand the numbers of migrant workers allowed into their countries, as their shifting economic needs demand. Meanwhile, workers are held prisoner by these arbitrary dividing lines, and used as cheap labor and cannon fodder in the bosses' wars.

Even as the bosses attack immigrant workers across the globe, they cynically rely on undocumented labor to extract profits. Whole sectors of the U.S. economy would fall apart without undocumented labor: "The vast majority (96.7%) of Mexican undocumented workers are working and contributing to the economy and are vital to critical American industries including agriculture (11.5 percent of the workforce), construction (6.7 percent), and the tourism and hospitality sector (3.4 percent)" (New American Economy Report, 3/8/2021).

One hallmark of capitalism in crisis is rising fascism, as the bosses seek to scapegoat certain workers for the system's spiraling failures. Trump and his billionaire backers built a movement on attacking immigrant workers. Now that Biden and his band of liberal Democrats and their own billionaire backers find themselves pathetically unable to alleviate the crisis, they are out-Trumping Trump in their racist anti-migrant attacks. The bosses can't admit that capitalism cannot possibly serve workers' needs. As the world spins toward global war, they will become increasingly vicious and organized in their assaults.

One international working class

The capitalist bosses have carved up the world through war and genocide. They build nationalism to enlist the working class to defend the lines that imprison and divide us. Every national border has been drawn with workers' blood. By keeping workers fighting each other, the ruling class ties us to their thieving, murderous rule. The time has come to erase the bosses' borders and to unite the international working class. The time has come to smash racism, sexism, and nationalism–to smash capitalism itself.

PLP knows that migrant workers are a critical element in this fight. They have deep knowledge of the horrors of capitalism from their own experience. They possess unlimited potential to turn their collective power to endure into a force for revolution. We must unite with migrant workers wherever we are.

Workers everywhere, on all sides of all borders, suffer from the exploitation, incompetence, and brutality of capitalism, from its callous indifference to human life. Communism means abolishing all nations. It means serving one world, one Party, one international working class. Join us! ✪

Abolition Conference

Need a party to smash bosses & their state

Washington, DC, May 6-8–PLers met with anti-racist fighters from across the U.S. at The University of California Washington Center for a 3-day abolitionist conference. Conference organizers brought together theorists, students and organizers working to abolish police, prisons, ICE, racist child "protective" services, and other institutional structures that capitalism has built to attack and repress the working class.

Progressive Labor Party (PLP) members led a panel on abolishing capitalism, the undergirding of all repressive institutions of the capitalist state. We do not just want to abolish or outlaw capitalism, we want the system fully smashed and guaranteed to never be introduced back into existence. In order to crush capitalism and its state, we need many of these serious organizers in attendance to join a revolutionary fighting party, the PLP, in order for it to grow and lead class struggle against the ruling class. This strategy is really the only way to achieve the abolitionist goals they so fervently desire.

To abolish all policing we need communism

To abolish cops, we must abolish capitalism

Participants in the conference were extremely open to a revolutionary perspective. Many already had this idea, but were not sure how to develop it further. Even two of the keynote speakers agreed, when questioned from the audience by a PLP member, that a revolutionary party was needed to achieve abolitionist goals. You just cannot abolish capitalist institutions without abolishing capitalism!

PLP maintained a literature table throughout the conference. In addition to CHALLENGE, the table featured flyers and information about many of the mass organizations in which PLP is active. The fight for justice for William Green and other Black workers murdered by the police and numerous public health struggles were featured.

Over 40 participants received CHALLENGE from the table and from other comrades throughout the conference and many connections were made. Many of these fighters are already engaged in various forms of class struggle.We will continue to make ongoing connections with these fighters, and try to win them to our radical abolitionist vision of society– a communist world rid of the capitalist ruler's racist and sexist kkkops, kkkourts, and prisons. ✪

Workers need power, not crumbs

Landlords will ignore 'good cause'–communism means housing for all!

New York City, May 18–Progressive Labor Party (PLP) comrades joined 300 workers and students in a powerful march sponsored by Make the Road NY in Bushwick, Brooklyn. We were protesting against high rents, displacement and evictions in this rapidly gentrifying neighborhood. Comrades connected with many friends in the march and on the streets. The demand of the organization and politicians who spoke was that the state legislature pass "Good Cause" legislation. "Good Cause," if passed, would supposedly mean that landlords across New York state with buildings with less than six apartments can't evict or raise rents dramatically without good cause.

Migrants not our enemies

As we marched, comrades chanted with the marchers and distributed 150 CHALLENGE papers about May Day around the world and 200 PLP leaflets demanding low rent housing for all homeless people in shelters and arriving migrants. New York City is now housing new migrants in the Roosevelt Hotel in Manhattan, paying the hotel owners $200 a night per room! The liberal bosses and their lackey politicians in NYC are deviously using these migrants to divide the working class and to distract us from the real enemies (the capitalists). The same way racism affects the entire working class, so does unemployment, which the bosses use in order to bring down wages for the entire working class, including for white workers. We can't let the bosses divide us and that's why all workers need to unite, Black, Latin, Asian and white. The bosses want to use migrants as scapegoats and want to blame them for their problems, but we need to direct our anger against the capitalist bosses.

Reform is never enough

Marchers enthusiastically took CHALLENGE and our leaflets which stated, "Workers need power, not crumbs! A worldwide system that won't provide jobs, housing and healthcare for the working class doesn't deserve to exist. The working class needs to destroy capitalism with revolution. We need a system that will collectively and globally eliminate exploitation, war, racism and sexism. We need communism, community in its essence."

The contradiction between reform and revolution was on display. While desperate, angry workers support reform, they know from experience that even if "Good Cause" is passed by the state government, it will largely be ignored by the landlords without long, drawn out cases in landlord court.

"Why are so many politicians speaking?" asked a participant.

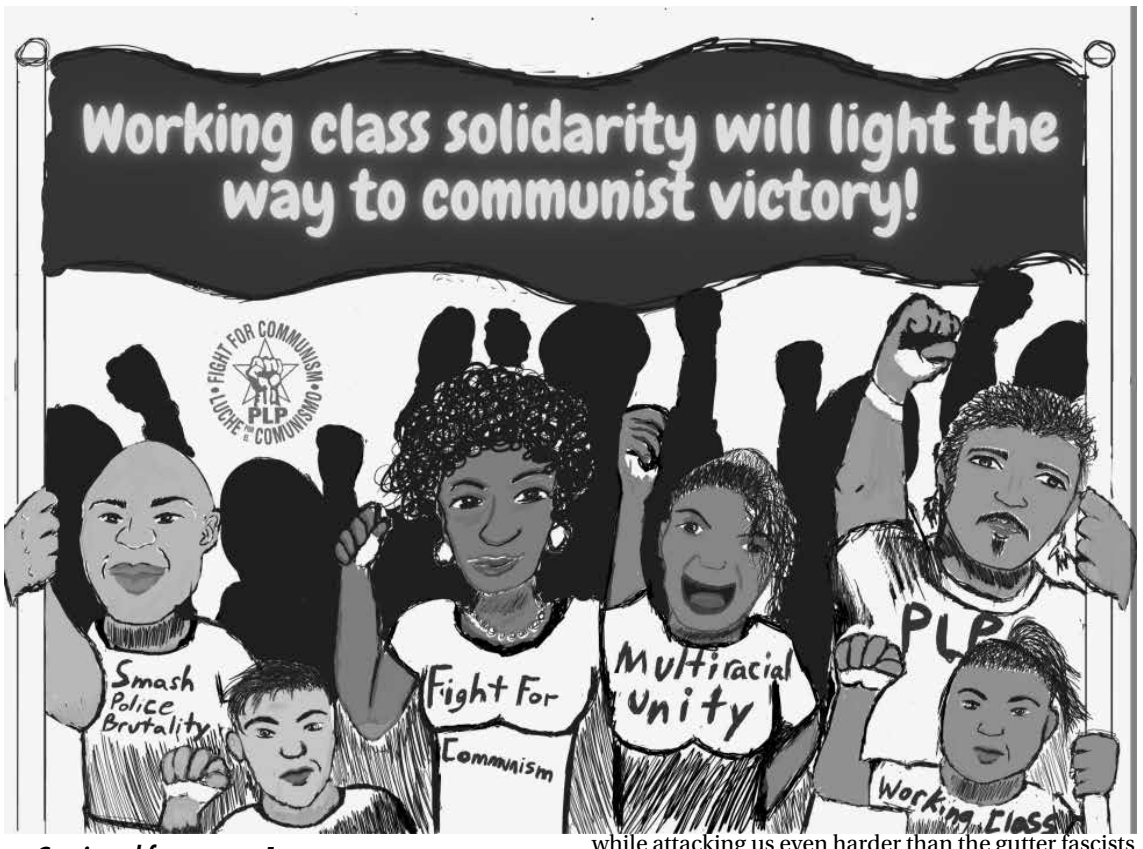
"To direct and control the workers' movement," answered a comrade.

"Why can't they pass a law forcing the landlords to open up empty buildings and apartments the landlords are holding?" a friend asked.

"Landlords are part of the capitalist ruling class and dominate all aspects of our lives," the comrade answered. Some workers say the fight for reforms is a step toward revolution. That's an illusion. There is no peaceful transition from reform to revolution. PLP's role is to participate in the reform fight while sharpening the revolutionary side of the contradiction. It's happening now!✪

May Day: Workers' Day

Colombia: Workers have no stake in bosses' dogfighting



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demonstrations, attacking those who disagree.

The current government -- seconded by their congress and union misleaders -- have called to the streets to "support the reforms" without even publishing the content of said reforms. This is because they prefer to arrange things with capitalists and other class enemies, negotiating for the approval of capitalist development "with a human face." In reality, their reforms are not radical at all but this wing has succeeded in blunting the militancy of workers here nevertheless. The ability of these social fascists to deceive our class while attacking us even harder than the gutter fascists is what makes them more dangerous. We are being called to take to the streets to support and defend the government's reforms which in fact means mobilizing to support capitalism, wage slavery, racism and private property.

We in PLP are convinced of the need to destroy the current capitalist society entirely. We are committed to root changes that really point towards the structural solution of the problems of the workers, the poor and the oppressed. The reforms proposed by the Government will continue to preserve the privileges of the powerful, which are in turn arranged and haggled over and over again in Congress, with the exploitative capitalists along with representatives of US imperialism. No workers' or youth input is seriously considered regarding the true nature of this society.

While they make us promises and call us to support their projects, the cost of living skyrockets, wages stagnate, and police continue to kill with impunity. More than 300 young people and workers remain in prison for participating in the struggles of the recent years. Figures report that there is 58% "informality," that is, unemployment, and millions more with racist contracts of super-exploitation.

The demands that we need from below are not going to come from the negotiation with the bosses and imperialists. The demands for health, employment, wages, the destruction of racism and sexism will not be resolved by concerting to preserve bourgeois and political interests. The streets should be ours, but not to defend the government, much less to support fascism. The streets must be reoccupied to fight in revolutionary unity, to resolve the demands and needs demanded in the multiple popular uprisings.

For more than 20 years we have been supporting different types of workers' struggle, making space for discussion, and building a base of friends and readers for communism. The current struggles of the farm workers, drivers, builders, the unemployed, housing workers, women's organizations, students, and sports clubs must unite in a great solidarity struggle to achieve revolutionary class consciousness, advancing the revolutionary process. The anger of the workers has a growing understanding that the profit system of destroys the life of the workers all over the world by radicalizing the current struggles from Peru to France to England and beyond.

Our newspaper CHALLENGE gives us the understanding of what these battles are about; our task is to create a mass base for communism by helping new leaders emerge and fighting to destroy capitalism and its racist, sexist wage system! We have no other choice –Join us!✪

Cambridge, MA:

Smash Racist Police Terror from Cambridge to Ukraine!

"Racist cops, you can't hide we charge you with genocide"

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30 plus strong, to Cambridge City Hall. There, we formed a picket line and heard more militant speeches from our comrades and friends condemning Cambridge's liberal politicians

for the role they play in pacifying and disarming the working class. They throw a protective shield around the cops and the whole fascist injustice system while they spread illusions that capitalism can be reformed.

Racist police murder is one example of how capitalism destroys the lives of working people here and around the world. As U.S. capitalists give tanks to Ukraine and prepare for wider war to defend their declining profit empire, they cut mental health and housing services at home. That is why the ruling class will need more fascism and police terror at home to quash working class anger.

Our chants of, "Racist cops, you can't hide we charge you with genocide" resonated with the workers and students on the street. We held our red flags high, and our banner called for smashing capitalism, racism, and borders with communist revolution. To achieve a just and healthy society, we need to destroy capitalism and build the egalitarian communist world that May Day represents. Because we held our event locally, rather than join the larger march in Brooklyn, we organized with increased vigor and now have more potential for growth than we've had in the past several years. Our future is bright if we fight for it! Join us! ✪

Modern Language Association

Democrats & Republicans, all enemies of the working class

It's a tale of two governors: Florida's racist Republican Ron DeSantis bans books, busts unions and ends tenure. New Jersey's Democratic "friend-of-labor" Phil Murphy breaks the first-ever Rutgers University strike of 9,000 educators, by summoning union and management into his office to broker a deceptive deal. Two apparent opposites, both waging the current bosses' war on higher education workers and students. Do their differences hide their sameness? Dialectical philosophy argues that apparent opposites are also interconnected—both share similarities and differences. In the end they are primarily same. Two sides of the same coin, representing the same rotten system.

Speakers from the Rutgers strike and the Florida antifascist fight took up this question on April 15 at a Modern Language Association Radical Caucus Roundtable, "The Racist Offensive Against Higher Education: Organizing a Marxist Response in the MLA."

The accounts of front-line struggle, along with radical analyses by a Newark-based community organizer and faculty speakers from Florida, Rutgers, and CUNY, electrified the 40-plus attendees. PLP participants helped push this discussion to the left with our own speakers, as well as being key organizers of the event.

"Teach students about class society so they can overthrow it"

The Newark community organizer framed the political and ideological stakes of the roundtable debate most sharply:

Our political work is to make visible how the education system at all levels has been formed by both liberals and fascists to keep capitalism in place. Before fascists were banning books, liberals were creating conditions in which students could not read: the capitalist education system is deliberately designed to give a handful of elite students a 'liberal' anti-racist and anti-sexist 'miseducation' to prepare us to be part of a capitalist managerial class, while grossly underfunding the overall education system so that the overwhelming majority of students at all levels, including college, are kept in the low ranks of the working class.

"Only a communist education can diagnose the problems of capitalism, and teach students the class nature of society so they can overthrow it," she concluded.

Appearance and essence

The keynote speaker praised the antiracist opposition to DeSantis and Murphy, yet offered a Marxist analysis of the anti-fascist struggle in Florida:

We need to analyze these newer, sharper right-wing offensives in connection to the much longer trends of the massive theft of the social wage and declining standard of living, not only for higher education workers but for the entire working class, native-born as well as immigrant, white as well as Black and brown.

She pointed out that both Republican and Democratic administrations have overseen decades of massive cuts in education that have proletarianized 75 percent of higher education faculty, who have no prospect of tenure and earn less than a living wage.

While DeSantis and Murphy are opponents in the political war between Democrats and Republicans, she emphasized that both governors operate as "state managers" for capital: to preserve the conditions for capitalists to make profits by exploiting workers. Social control of universities and unions by the state—in either its liberal or its fascist versions—is key for capitalism to flourish. Two Florida union speakers later referred to this capitalist control of education as teaching "anticipatory obedience"—forcing union faculty to obey racist state laws, teaching students to obey future bosses.

"Fascism is on a continuum with liberalism"

"Fascism is on a continuum with liberalism," the first faculty union speaker from Florida put it starkly, giving a Marxist view different from the dominant liberal view of fascism. Faculty are fighting hard against new laws that tighten state control of curriculum, eliminate DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) and erode academic freedom, he said. The most explicit shift from liberalism to fascism in Florida is using state funds to create a new University of Florida institute, The Hamilton Center, to uphold right-wing ideology (Chronicle of Higher Education, 2/22). A recent Scientific American article (4/7/2023) says that the new Florida policies "mirror past fascist strategies" used in Italy by Mussolini.

A CUNY community college professor on the panel showed how the liberal CUNY system misleads working-class urban students into the individualism of "social mobility," a multicultural spin on the American Dream. "Campus DEI initiatives are held up with pride, but in moments of crisis, this veneer falls away" and administrators show their true colors.

Another Florida faculty union militant called on everyone present to "Organize, organize, organize. That's what I've been doing for 30 years and will continue doing." A Rutgers graduate student and strike organizer scathingly attacked New Jersey Governor Murphy, as well as Rutgers President "good cop" Holloway (a Black civil rights historian), and the union misleaders who suspended the strike at Murphy's urging. "Next time union members have to be prepared to go further and stay out against the leaders' double-cross," she declared.

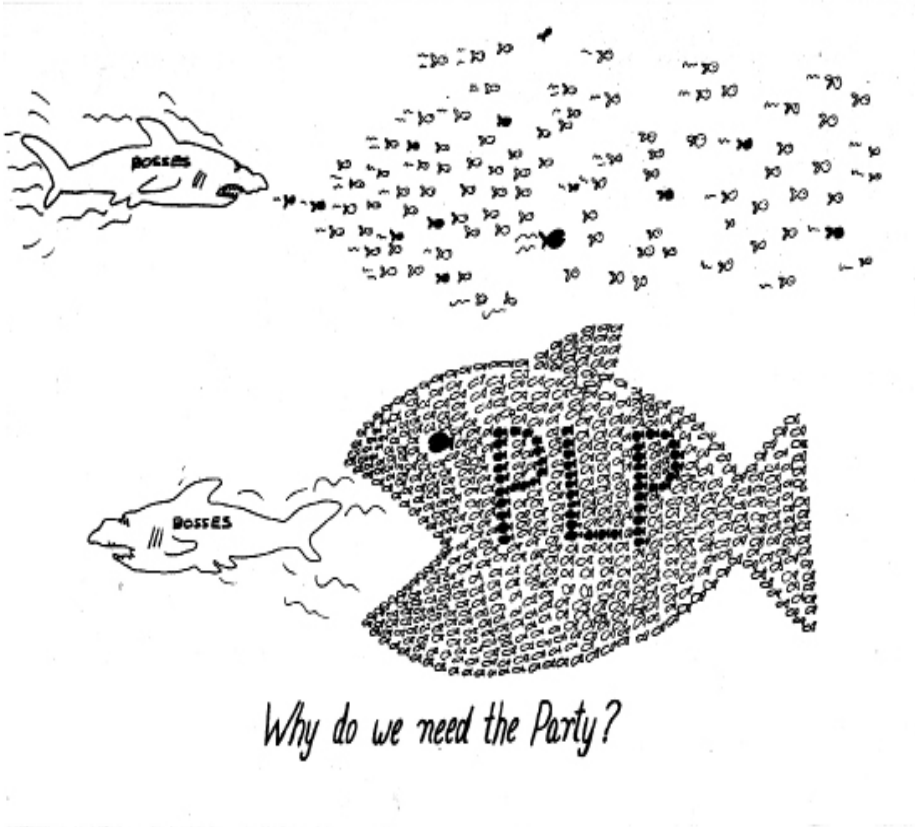
Communists never give up building workers' power

For communists, winning means building workers' power. Our Florida friends are feeling down today because the DeSantis laws were passed. Many Rutgers organizers were also disappointed by the suspension of their strike. But look at the Florida motto, "Organize, organize, organize!" It comes from the history of workers fighting again even after a defeat: the only defeat is giving up. As Lenin wrote, "strikes are schools for communism." The lesson of Florida, that "fascism is on a continuum with liberalism," puts us already further down the road to revolution.

The role of PLP at this forum was to strengthen ourselves and our co-workers with that communist vision. As they teach us valuable lessons in how to rebel against the racist state control of education, our role is to build power for workers' revolution, where winning means taking state power from the capitalists. Then a human history—not the history of warring classes but of workers' control over their lives, can begin in earnest.✪

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.



The work of Carolyn's life speaks for her

I met Carolyn in Tupelo, Mississippi in the summer of 1979. David Duke, leader of the KKK, had declared that Tupelo would become the national headquarters of the Klan. Progressive Labor Party and INCAR, an organization we were building at the time, refused to accept this and launched a campaign to make Tupelo the headquarters of antiracism and the fight for communism. Over 40 volunteers joined the Project at various times. Carolyn was there the entire summer.

The Project dug deep roots in the Black working class of Tupelo. We organized public CHALLENGE sales, rallies and lots of visiting to make and consolidate friends who joined the Project. Carolyn was involved in it all.

I actually met her when she was sitting on the balcony of the apartment where volunteers were living. She was making "sun tea." She had a gallon jar filled with tea bags, sugar and lemon slices. We had a long talk as the hot summer sun brewed the tea. I realized later that she was lounging there because she was recovering from her gunshot wounds.

Mid-way through the Project a march was organized from the Black worker's housing project where we had a base to downtown Tupelo, where there was a rally. Carolyn and Findley Campbell were standing at the sound truck giving speeches when a racist, who we later learned had been released from jail that morning and given the shotgun, opened fire into the crowd.

Carolyn and Findley were sprayed with birdshot. Our security team leaped into action, tackling the shooter and keeping him from firing again. Suddenly the police, who had not been visible before, swarmed over our team, arresting many. Birdshot, used for shooting birds, sprays small pellets. Carolyn was shot down one leg. Although the doctors were able to find and remove some of the pellets, many remained in her leg the rest of her life.

Our comrade, Floyd, was charged with attempted murder and held without bail. I arrived in Tupelo at that point to work on the legal case. No defense attorney in the state of Mississippi would take the case. The district attorney called Carolyn and Findley to appear before a Grand Jury conniving to get them to testify against our comrade charged with murder! I warned them that we were all probably going to jail for what we were going to do. There was no hesitation. Carolyn and Findley were each called into the room and refused to say a word. Ranting and raving, the prosecutor called me into the room. I told the whole story, since I was not a witness to any of it. As Carolyn had come out she whispered to me that she recognized some of our CHALLENGE readers on the Grand Jury! The workers of Tupelo were on our side. The charges were dismissed.

The Project immediately organized a second march. Walking in the first row as we headed downtown was Carolyn proudly waving a red flag. That's how I will always remember her–proudly waving the red flag!!

★★★★★

It's good to see the big picture

I was disappointed that I could not attend Progressive Labor Party's May Day march in Brooklyn on Saturday, April 29. However, on Monday, May 1, I accompanied a comrade to a march in Trenton, NJ being led by Cosecha. Cosecha is an organization that struggles to improve the conditions of undocumented workers. They fight for driver's licenses, paths to citizenship, etc. My comrade has worked with that organization for a few years. On the drive down, he was expressing his frustration about how little he thought he had accomplished with them in all that time.

When we arrived, there was a lot of evidence to the contrary. The members of Cosecha had adopted several of PLP's chants – "La clase Obrera, No Tienen Fronteras" and "Obreros, Unidos, Jamas Seran Vencidos" (The working class has no borders, and Workers, united, will never be defeated). Although my Spanish is intermediate, I could tell there was much more class analysis in the speeches.

I congratulated my comrade on the impact he has had over the years. It pays to be in it for the long haul.

In addition, we distributed many DESAFIOS (spanish version CHALLENGE), not only to the marchers, but to the residents of the largely immigrant neighborhood where we marched.

★★★★★

A Neighbor's story with CHALLENGE

This past Saturday a couple of comrades, including an awesome high school student, came to do another CHALLENGE newspaper sale at the 15 floor building where my partner and I live. A neighbor had the following to say after we asked him what he thought about it. The first time he saw the newspaper outside his door he did not pay it much attention. Eventually, he grabbed it and left it in his car. Then, during his lunch break he began looking through it and even started to discuss some of the ideas with a coworker. He told us, "When I read the paper I feel strongly. By now I know I'm going to get another. And look forward to it."

He also spoke about how challenging life as an immigrant father and husband from Ghana is in the U.S. How supervisors at his job have used his ideas in a way that has discouraged him from wanting to contribute further. How he wishes we lived in a world where people were encouraged to freely contribute our naturally endowed gifts to provide for each other. We responded by saying, "That's communism!" He shared how more recently a bill collector called him to get their money for a Covid test his family had received way back when the pandemic was more intense. He was trying to say how backwards capitalist society is in that it puts profits first over people's wellbeing. He also expressed that what the paper is communicating reminds him of parts of his life where he has been vocal about what is wrong with this system. We told him that the fact that the paper's ideas have hit this key cord within him to the extent that he felt compelled to share it with a coworker is a really powerful thing! We asked him if he would be open to coming over to our apartment in the near future to talk more about these communist politics. To which he said definitely!

Our neighbor's growing confidence in our ideas and willingness to get closer to us represent another nail in the coffin of a profit system that depends on keeping us divided in order to keep exploiting us. This new development - one of many recently in our building - is the product of becoming more disciplined and committed about distributing CHALLENGE where we have lived over the last 4+ years and fighting to be more communist in the way that we live, share with our neighbors, and respond to each other's needs.

★★★★★

I protested: rent too damn high!

I attended a protest in Jersey City titled The Rent is Too High put on by a local chapter of Democratic Socialists of America (DSA). While the march attracted some vocal young workers, the majority of the downtown crowd they were speaking to seemed indifferent.

Maybe it is due to their call to action, which involves passing a measure before the city council for a right to counsel for tenants paid for by developer taxes in the future. If that sounds far off to you as well, you are right. While local agitation and engagement is good, without a permanent solution of communist hope and revolution, the struggle will continue.

★★★★★

Remember: it was the reds who smashed the Nazis

May 9th is the day that the Soviet Union celebrates the defeat of Nazi Germany and its allies. In the largest land war in history with 27 million dead, the Soviet people, led by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union led by Joseph Stalin, smashed, at least for a time, the most evil doctrine yet to appear on our planet. Had the Nazis defeated the Soviet Union, many if not most of us would not be here to talk about it.

Even though Germany and other countries banned the flying of Russian and Soviet flags during the demonstrations there, people all over the world celebrated the Soviet victory.

Today the PLP is attempting to learn from and advance upon the lessons of the USSR. Visit the PLP.org website for more information.

★★★★★

GLOSSARY:

COMMUNIST TERMS

Fascism

Capitalism's response to a crisis of their system, when the bosses can no longer sustain the charade of liberal democracy and resort to more direct control and state terror instead. Fascism is marked by the ruling capitalists disciplining their own ranks to serve the urgent needs of the capitalist state and weather the crisis. To defend their system from internal and external threats, they use all the means available in their state apparatus, including violence. To build unity within their class and loyalty from workers, they rely on nationalist politics and calls for sacrifice. Their strategy is to mislead the working class to kill our working class sisters and brothers in the next inter-imperialist war.

Big Fascists

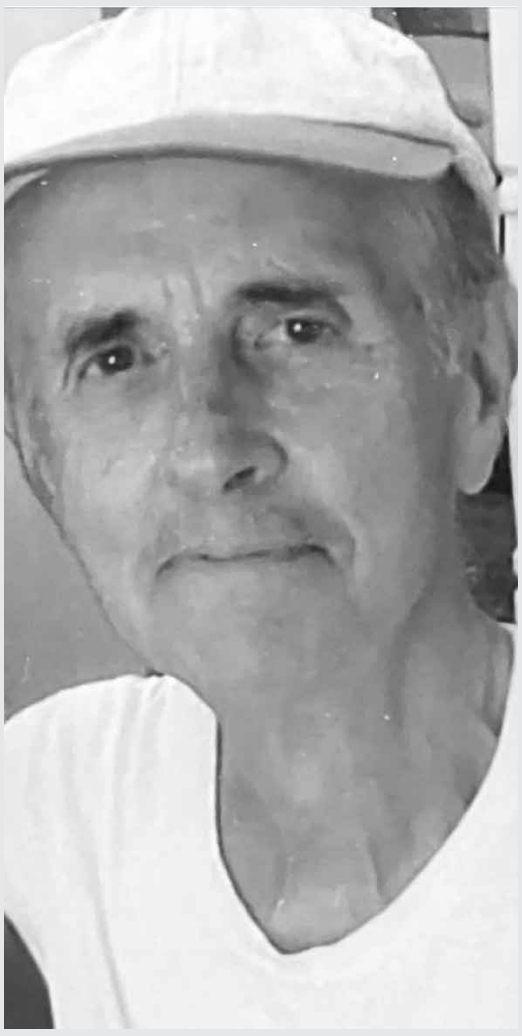
The Big Fascists are the dominant finance capitalist faction of the U.S. ruling class. They represent the wealthiest and most powerful bosses in the U.S., including multinational banks like Chase and Citibank, multinational oil companies like ExxonMobil, the big automakers, Boeing, Amazon, and the major media companies. As the dominant grouping since World War II, the Big Fascists were the architects of the liberal world order with the U.S. bosses on top. Their dominance rests on U.S. financial and military power and its strategic control of the Middle East and the flow of oil to Europe, Asia, and Africa. To sustain this dominance, they need to rebuild a huge, multiracial military for inter-imperialist war, most likely with China.

Small Fascists

The Small Fascists are a group of domestically oriented U.S. capitalists who are challenging the Big Fascists over the direction of U.S. imperialism. Since their interests are less tied to controlling the flow of oil, they are against heavy taxation to keep troops in the Middle East and in general oppose costly military bases and invasions. They're willing to rely on a smaller, whiter army, backed by nuclear weapons and the Air Force. They use open racism to build a political following.

Rest in power

A red salute to Russell Phillips



From Tupelo to New York City, to Philadelphia, a life long Red

In early January of this year Comrade Russell Phillips died. He was a longtime member of The Progressive Labor Party. Russell worked at Lenox Hill Hospital for about 5 years in the late 70's to early 80's.

Along with other Party members he consistently fought the management of that hospital around racism. He also combined bread and butter issues (he worked in the engineering department) with broader international issues.

He would leaflet and sell CHALLENGE consistently both in the hospital and outside at the entrance.

In 1983, when Russell was leafleting against the Reagan invasion of Lebanon, the hospital bosses instigated a backward worker to violently attack him with a 2 by 4. That worker was suspended and Russell was fired.

The sellout hospital workers union 1199 to whom Russell had been a thorn in the side of, did not defend him and he ultimately lost his job but over the course of those years had brought many communist ideas to the hospital workers.

In 1979, he was involved in PLP's activities in Tupelo, Mississippi when the Party violently fought back the attacks of the Klan.

Russell soon after moved to NYC and organized at Lenox Hill Hospital against the hospital bosses and sellout 1199 leaders.

Eventually moving to Philadelphia, Russell did political work in a small church.

Russell was always reading the Party literature and many other sources. He called me a week before he died to discuss a podcast he had just seen criticizing NATO's instigation of The Ukrainian War.

Russell was just shy of 91. He had good innings but will be missed by his close friend in Philadelphia Jean and the many comrades and workers who knew him. Rest in power✪

Uprising for workers' power

Continued from page 8

For the working class to take and hold power it is essential that the revolutionary communist movement be able to correct ideological errors and bad practice. Criticism and self-criticism of our ideas and activity is the only way we can deal with problems and mistakes that arise. The leadership of the Party especially has to honestly and soberly evaluate their own ideas and practice and be open to criticism from others.

Perhaps the main weakness that led to the defeat of the GPCR was the belief in the cult of the individual surrounding Mao Tse Tung. A big weakness of the old communist movement was that it built up individual leaders as people who could do no wrong. While the Left forces in China recognized that China had moved back to capitalism, they held on to the wrong idea that Mao, the leader of the country, was not a supporter of the backward changes. He was; and ultimately Mao used his influence and his control of the Army to put down the revolution.

Struggle, Fail, Struggle… WIN

The lessons of the GPCR are one of the driving forces in history that has given PLP the confidence that the working class will fight for a communist future. It has also helped us understand the need to continually struggle against the capitalist ideology of individualism in ourselves and in the communist movement. The effort of the working class in the GPCR has been an invaluable contribution to the fight for communism.

Other lessons learned from the GPCR:

Confidence in the working class and the need for a mass communist party: We are building a party that is open to everyone who wants to fight for a communist future for the working class. People can make contributions in many different ways and the more people who participate in building the Party and ultimately running society the better off we will be.

Breakdown of the separation between "experts" and "followers:" In CHALLENGE, we try to explain what is going on in the world as well as have articles on fighting back in the class struggle. We believe that we can only understand the world by trying to change it and knowledge and understanding comes out of putting communist ideas into practice. We call this "better red than expert!"

The struggle for communism will continue for generations. The working class taking state power is only the beginning of the fight to build a communist society.

Commemorating the 56th anniversary of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is an opportunity to struggle with our coworkers and friends to renew our efforts to smash this racist, sexist, imperialist system of capitalism once and for all. Fighting back also means understanding what previous generations in this fight have done – both right and wrong. As the world lurches toward fascism and inter-imperialist war, we have our work cut out for us. We, heirs to the struggle for a communist world, truly honor the heroic masses who fought in the GPCR by organizing on our jobs and in our mass organizations for armed communist revolution. Dare to struggle, dare to win!✪

RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Pro-U.S. generals in Pakistan move to sideline Khan from elections

Foreign Policy, 5/17–A week after his arrest on corruption charges, former Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan faces an escalating confrontation with the country's political establishment. Recent developments suggest Pakistan's military leadership is going full throttle to sideline Khan and his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party from politics. National elections, currently scheduled for October, loom. Khan blamed Pakistan Army chief Asim Munir for ordering his arrest by paramilitary forces last Tuesday; he was released a few days later. Just before his arrest, Khan repeated allegations that a senior military officer was behind a November assassination attempt against him, which the military denies.

U.S. decline and China's rise in Middle East– a review

Foreign Affairs, May/June 2023–In March 2023, China's announcement that it had brokered renewed diplomatic relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran threw into sharp relief the United States' rapidly diminishing role in the Middle East…the United States completed its inept withdrawal from Afghanistan, a country that Washington had spent 20 years trying and failing to bring into the Western fold. Then the president [Joe Biden]…soon found the Saudis rebuffing a U.S. request to increase oil production during the war in Ukraine. Meanwhile, U.S. diplomatic efforts to revive the Iran nuclear deal faltered…And the administration looked on helplessly as the most far-right government in Israeli history came to power, threatening the country's claims to democracy, fueling a new wave of violence, and jeopardizing the Washington-backed Abraham Accords. Observers may be forgiven for wondering whether U.S. influence in the region has declined permanently.

Workers in U.S. and around the world are becoming poorer

Brookings, 5/16–Current inequality levels are high. Contemporary global inequalities are close to the peak levels observed in the early 20th century, at the end of the prewar era (variously described as the Belle Époque or the Gilded Age) that saw sharp increases in global inequality. Over the past four decades, there has been a broad trend of rising income inequality across countries. Income inequality has risen in most advanced economies and major emerging economies, which together account for about two-thirds of the world's population and 85 percent of global GDP. The increase has been particularly large in the United States, among advanced economies, and in China, India, and Russia, among major emerging economies.

Peaceful change in Sudan transforms into bloody war

Der Spiegel, 4/22–Starting in December 2018, Sudanese author Shadin Al Fadil wrote one of the most impressive chapters of the Arab democracy movements for their country - one which has been ravaged by massacres, famine and crises over the years. They managed to achieve what no one had believed possible: They protested until they drove dictator Omar al-Bashir from office. After 30 years of dictatorship, democracy suddenly seemed within reach. Sudan had become emblematic of what can be achieved through peaceful resistance.

Since then, though, hopes for democracy have been further and further destroyed by the country's powerful military. And now, those dreams could be buried for good in a hail of bombs. Since the early hours of Saturday morning, Africa's third-largest country has been in a state of war. There is fighting in almost all parts of the country, with two rival generals and their armies facing off against each other. On one side is Sudan's regular armed forces, commanded by the de facto president, General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan. On the other is the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), under the command of his deputy Lieutenant General Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, known as Hemeti.

THE CHINESE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

UPRISING FOR WORKERS' POWER

The great proletarian cultural revolution workers in China fighting to oust fake communists"

The following piece has been updated from its original publication in volume 48 no.25 dated December 21, 2016.

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR) was an historic uprising of the working class led by the most advanced communist ideas at the time. It was the first time the working class attempted to take state power back from a former communist party that had returned to capitalism.

The leader of the Communist Party of China (CPC), Mao Tse Tung (now Mao Zedong), initially encouraged the Cultural Revolution to get rid of a few people in the leadership of the Party. But some workers in the Cultural Revolution recognized that the official Communist Party was already in the hands of a capitalist ruling class at the time the GPCR began. They argued that the vast majority (90 percent) of the leading cadres were part of that oppressor class, that the People's Liberation Army (or PLA, the military) was its tool to smash the real Left and maintain power. They said that the new "red" bourgeoisie had emerged during the 17 years from 1949-66 from the ranks of the revolutionaries themselves and, therefore, that the GPCR was not, as Mao said, a struggle to consolidate proletarian rule, but the first revolution in history to attempt to take power back from the fake "communists," known as revisionists. This analysis led the left workers and students leading the Cultural Revolution to carry out the following political campaigns.

1) They demanded the ouster of the chief representative of China's "red" capitalists, Chou En-Lai, along with the high-ranking economic and administrative ministers he was sheltering.

2) They demanded that the GPCR be carried into the Army Officer Corps, which they saw as a part of the new ruling class. They engaged in arms seizures from the PLA, raiding depots and arms trains, on the principle that a revolution to overthrow the bourgeoisie had to be an armed struggle of the masses.

3) They opposed China's foreign policies of alliance with capitalist countries. To carry this through they seized foreign ships in the harbors, burned the British consulate in August of 1967, launched a liberation struggle in Hong Kong, seized Soviet arms going to Vietnam over China's railroad lines and opposed China's nuclear development program.

4) They began to discuss and implement the formation of a new communist party, given their assumption that the CPC had become the party of the bourgeois apparatus that was restoring capitalism under the ideological cover of a fake brand of communism.

The left forces presented a view of what was going on in the GPCR which was contradictory to the official views of the CPC under Mao, who claimed "95 percent of the cadres are good" vs. the left-wing forces in the GPCR who said "90 percent of the political cadres must step aside."

Fake "communists" spread capitalist lies

To amplify how completely the Chinese bosses have now moved to capitalism, they now tell the same lies about the Cultural Revolution as the U.S. bosses. The distorted historical narrative told by the capitalists who currently rule China, and retold and amplified by capitalists around the world, is that the Cultural Revolution was "10 lost years" in which the Chinese economy was on the brink of collapse.

However, when one of the participants in a San Francisco conference celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Cultural Revolution went to China with a group of Western economists in the midst of the Cultural Revolution in 1972, the iconic liberal mainstream economist John Kenneth Galbraith was in the delegation and reviewed economic data made available by the Chinese leadership and calculated that the GDP was growing at about 9 percent per year, similar to the rate touted as the "Chinese miracle" after the restoration of capitalism after the late 1970s.

The participation of millions of workers and farmers in political meetings did not cause production to stop, or even to slow down. The criticism of factory or farm managers to a previously unheard of degree, and active involvement in "non-productive" activities that amounted to having a say in the running of society, in fact energized the masses of workers and farmers.

The Communists accomplished feats that would be called miracles under capitalism, starting with spreading literacy across a country of a billion people, introducing health care and ending starvation in what had been one of the poorest countries in the world prior to the communist revolution. Their efforts in the GPCR showed the importance of continuing the struggle for workers' power even after a revolution. But to ultimately succeed in building a communist society we have to look at the errors of the CPC as well. While the left forces in the GPCR did so many great things they ultimately were defeated and capitalism was firmly established in China. It is important for us to try to understand why the GPCR failed.

One Step Forward, Two Steps Back

Communist movements will inevitably make many mistakes, big and small. The Progressive Labor Party previously believed in fighting for socialism as an intermediary step towards communism. Now, largely from looking at what happened in the former Soviet Union and China, we are fighting for the building of a communist society directly. It is not the only correction we have made or will have to make going forward.

Continued on page 7

WRITE FOR CHALLENGE!

CHALLENGE strives to be the communist paper for and by the international working class. We call on all readers, supporters, and comrades to submit class struggle articles, analytical pieces, original photos and graphics, letters, and political cartoons.

The next deadline is night of Friday, June 2.

Send to desafio.challenge@gmail.com. For some guidance and house style rules, please go to www.bit.ly/338ZJow

All submissions are open to collective discussion, struggle, and change. See sidebar on page 2 about fighting for collectivity and against a cult of the individual.

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